

HARLEM FRIENDSHIP HOUSE NEWS



Vol. 2, No. 7, Dec., 1942 Without Interracial Justice

Social Justice Will Fail

New York, N. Y., 5 Cents

Our Christmas Wish

Catherine de Hueck

Dark and dim is Harlem this Christmas . . . Friendship House's fifth on one hundred and thirty-fifth street. We came here at the height of the depression, and witnessed the blackout of hope in the hearts and souls of men, women and children who lived here. Now one by one, other lights have gone out in the cities of the world. Mourners of peace, heralders of war, we are still here witnessing the miracles of God's grace. For the darker are the city lights, the brighter are the lights in the heart of men who find new hopes arising on the ashes of old despair.

For men all over the world are fighting for a better world to come where freedom and justice will reign. In Harlem above all, this hope runs high, as the Negro stands at the cross road of his destiny, and looks ahead sending his youth into the battle. Much yet has to be done to strengthen this hope in his wounded and bruised soul, but many are the voices that pledge to him their untiring support . . . he is not alone, as of old . . . many friends rally to his side. Amongst them humble and small is Friendship House, its strength the blessing of the Bishops, which is the blessing of the Church, Spouse of the Holy Ghost.

Our fifth Christmas!! God is good. And so are you our friends all over

America. But for you, we could not be here. For all we do is just give ourselves, but you, you give us the tools to fight this eternal battle we are engaged in, on the front lines of the Church's eternal battle against the world and the devil.

IT is you, who have given us money for our Clubs and Adult Work. It is you who have sent clothing, books, magazines, and thousands of other gifts, that have helped us to reach all in need. It is you again who thru your untiring charity have given us courage to carry on against all odds. You have stood by thru thick and thin. Your hands clasped ours, when we were bogged down under the weight of a thousand problems. Friendship House is You . . . You and We . . . working for Christ in the Negro, fighting for the realization of the Brotherhood of Man under the Fatherhood of God. For an America, a world come of age, the age of grace and wisdom to kneel humbly this Christmas before the Crib of a tiny Baby, who in His little hands holds the answer to all our fears and doubts. Yes, friends from afar and near, this has been your battle too . . . you and we . . . side by side.

Overwhelmed, we kneel before God made man, looking at His utter helplessness taken unto Himself for our

sake, that we might be strong. We pray for you. We ask Him for so much for you, and then find that all this torrent of words and supplication, that tumbles like a waterfall from our lips, on your behalf, can be reduced to just one prayer . . . and so we murmur over and over again . . . "Beloved, may these loyal, good friends of ours be blessed with charity, whose other name is love. Love of You, Beloved, for if they love You they possess You, and possessing You they have time and eternity. They have the world. They have life and light eternal." And turning our faces to His Mother who kneels so quietly at His Crib and we ask again "Blessed Mother, cover them, these friends of ours, with the blue mantle of your love and keep them safe."

THEN we are wordless, for there are no words . . . to thank the gracious Bishops of the Church Militant who have stooped to our lowliness, and showered on us their blessings and gifts, their encouraging words and help. There are no words to thank the saintly Priests, all over U. S. A. who in season and out of season, have answered our call for money, their valuable time, their holy prayers. Can anyone find words with which one could thank priests for their Masses

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HARLEM FRIENDSHIP HOUSE NEWS

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Owned and Operated by Friendship House
Printed in N. Y. by Carroll Press**A CHRISTMAS GIFT****(A True Story)**

THE last parcel was tied, the paper and tinsel put away, the trees in each club room decorated. Everything was ready for tomorrow the Birthday of Christ.

Small and humble was Friendship House but it brought much joy and happiness to the children of the neighborhood with its five Christmas parties for old and young. We liked them so, all of us who worked late into the night to prepare the small simple gifts. We had done so again this Christmas and now it was late and I was tired, everyone had gone home, there was nothing to do but lock up.

The weather had turned cold, with sleet and rain and a high wind. The streets were deserted and dark. We walked slowly, half awake, half asleep looking forward to a hot bath, clean clothing and midnight Mass, less than an hour away. At the turning of a corner we bumped into a little group of Negroes. A man, a woman and a little child in her arms. They stood forlorn and somewhat bewildered peering at the numbers on the street. Seeing us they politely asked if we knew of a place where they could spend the night. They were strangers they said, and had traveled a long way. They did not know their way about a big city either. So far the few passersby had not been too helpful or friendly.

Perhaps it was an agelong memory that made us do what we did, but on the spur of the moment we invited them to our one-room little apartment, and explained that it was warm there and we could talk things over. They gratefully accepted, asking solicitously, if this would not put us out too much. We assured them it was all right, and they were welcome. Once inside, it became evident that the woman was very tired. The child shivered a little, the man looked weary and worried. We busied ourselves, warming the milk for the baby, making coffee and eggs for the father and mother. Soon the baby was asleep. The mother softly told us their story. The man was mostly silent, nodding once in a while, as if to confirm the words of the woman. The story was very trite. They had come from the deep South, in search of work. He had heard there was work around New York City. He was a carpenter (we could not help it, we were startled when she said that) but their slender resources had given out, and they hoped that someone would give them shelter and food until they could find work.

We busied ourselves with the phone. Few agencies are open at midnight Christmas Eve. The ones that were open were full and could not help until the next day. The woman had dozed off, on the couch near the baby.

The man sat straight in his chair, watching over them. Protective.

We shall never know, what made us give up our room that night, but we did, and went to Mass, leaving them in possession of our abode. That night we slept with friends. Never explaining to them why . . . afraid, perchance, of being called sentimentalists, or fools. We have been called that so often it got wearisome.

Christmas morning we hurried home wondering all the while. We knocked, there was no answer. We opened the door and found them gone. Everything was clean and tidy. The dishes washed. The bed made. The little Christmas tree was lit and under it was the little creche all changed around. The Infant in its place, and we had hunted high and low for Him the day before. The shepherds standing in a strange procession. We did not put them that way, this we remembered clearly. Nor was the Negro Magi there. We had saved Him and his companions for Epiphany, but there they were, the Negro Magi first, and where could that Infant have come from?

Of our guests not a trace. But for the tree all lit up, and the creche all rearranged we would have thought it was a dream. We are not sure yet. But somehow ever since that night we feel as if our little, poor apartment was strangely blessed. Do you blame us for feeling that way? It was Christmas Eve after all, and they were three . . . a man, a woman and a baby.

STAFF REPORTER

by B. R. B.

THE club rooms are teeming with excitement these days, for the children are working off more of that excess energy by preparing a Christmas play. From what we can gather it must be a definitely English production, as our little "Cubs" have been exhibiting a very convincing Oxford accent recently. And they are quite adept at it, believe me. Those little "Cubs" are the part of the F. H. family that we want to see really happy on Christmas day. Do you know what they would like? Well, we will tell you. They would like some good children's books, children's Catholic books. Like those suggested in the November 20th issue of the Commonweal. Of course, they would be so sad and horribly disappointed if they didn't have candy, nuts and fruit too. It just wouldn't be Christmas. This being the biggest day of the year in the life of a child we don't want to let them down, and we won't, will we?

May we express our gratitude to you, our faithful friends, who take such remarkable care of us during the year. For you are our "life line" that supplies us in the carrying on of our work here on the Interracial Front. And what prompts you to take such good care of us month after month, repeatedly, in so many various ways? Making possible the Catholic College education of Negro youth, the summer camp for children, the functioning of our club rooms, and the thousand little "assists" in the Social dept. The spirit of Him who was born on Christmas is within you, and you do not stifle it, but make it grow, for "by their deeds you shall know them."

We are your hands, and these hands will be folded in a prayer for your happiness during the Christmas season. May the Christ Child reward you abundantly for your participation in the struggle for Interracial Justice. Our deep appreciation and love are our gift to you. Thank you, and may you continue to be our Second Front.

NOVEMBER 5th — RED LETTER DAY IN CHICAGO FRIENDSHIP HOUSE

by

Ann Harrigan



POSSESSION

by Sister M. Madeleva

*I cannot chant the angel's hymn
As did the hosts of seraphim.*

*I cannot even cross the wild
As shepherds did, to find the Child.*

*I cannot shine, a living star,
To guide grave magi from afar.*

*I have no incense, myrrh or gold
For gift as had the kings of old.*

*In all the world there is nowhere
A place so poor, a spot so bare.*

*Save the rude cave at Bethlehem town
Where Christ, my Saviour, laid Him down.*

*Because I am like that mean stall,
I may possess him most of all.*



Fr. Maloney! This was too much. I sat down, unnoticed by the passing throng who began to drop in and listen to the booming voice of the "big blonde lady." And then I saw the curtains! They were all up and looked so handsome, as only burgundy monks cloth can. Dear Blessed Martin! You didn't let us down.

TELEGRAMS, more flowers, candles lighting . . . then came dear Clara our first friend, who stood there radiantly happy with two big tears in her eyes, admiring how we had placed her lovely pictures of Our Lady, above the shelves.

"C'mere, Ann," said Joe and his artist friend. They led me up to the front where on a wall a copy of an original copper painting of Martin was set off by a scroll—done as they had plotted it the night before—in antique gilt lettering that made you think of dusty tombs and silent centuries. My heart leaped for joy. Everything was in readiness.

People began to stream in at an alarming rate till it was so crowded you couldn't see a thing but the ceiling. Then that mass of humanity grew silent. My heart beat faster as I pushed my way up front. Sure enough . . . it was the Bishop, our beloved Bishop Sheil. I kissed his ring with, "Welcome to Friendship House, your Excellency!" Right in back of me was the Baroness, Ellen and Mildred and then a host of others. The press crowded around; bulbs flashed on and off, punctuated by cries of, "Where's Tarry? Harrigan, they want you for a picture! Just one more, your Excellency," etc. Then we sat down, and Horace Cayton, head of the South Park Community Center spoke the welcome of the community when he said, "Anyone who knows Chicago knows that FH is most needed and very cordially welcome." The Baroness then spoke, and next came the Bishop. His smashing speech at Kansas City recently, pleading for the cessation of Jim Crowism in the Mystical Body of Christ re-echoed in his words to us all assembled, some of whom were from the neighborhood, others from all over Chicago. Ellen, Mildred, and I spoke a few words each, just as refreshments were about to be served.

IN one corner where we had erected an exhibition of Ellen's latest juvenile, "Hezekiah Horton" (Viking, \$1.00), Antoinette de Roulet was the center of a galaxy of notables . . . Frs. Meegan and Shannon, Ed Doherty, Fr. Smith. Dora Bess was talking to Mrs. Eolann Harrison of Birmingham. Fr. Rufinus, our Franciscan friend, chatted with Frs. May, Gallagher, and O'Brien. John Doeble, Bill Temple and Mrs., Lieut Cayton (WAAC), Nellie Ryan, Frs. Cantwell, Wagner and the well known Monsignor Hillenbrand, were some other notables present.

When the Bishop left, the crowd dwindled, the food disappeared quickly, and soon a few faithfules remained to "do the dirty work," people like Margaret Mann and Julia Daniels. As we went home that night we thought: From Chicago we have received many precious gifts, warm friendships, and a real welcome. To Chicago we bring our love of all men because we are brothers of Christ in God, and we pledge ourselves to be satisfied with nothing less than the realization of this Truth.

OUR CHRISTMAS WISH

(Continued from Page 1)

for us? A Mass . . . a gift beyond words or thanks . . . immense . . . Infinite.

And the good Sisters, how can we thank them? Their prayers, penances, gifts, works on our behalf. Where are the thanks that could begin to express what we feel. And the Catholic Laity, and those not of our faith, and our Colored friends. Bereft of words we are before this avalanche of help, before this Christ-like charity, before this depth of understanding and help.

Thank you . . . thank you . . . thank you again. Our collective Christmas Masses will be yours. Beside it . . . this infinite gift . . . we are poor and empty-handed. We have nothing to give but our gratitude and love. And these are yours, friends, yours from the Friendship Houses of Harlem, New York City, and Forty-third Street, Chicago.

May God bless you this holy season of His birth. May the Holy Ghost overshadow you with His seven gifts. May the Blessed Mother smile on you, and St. Joseph pray for you and yours. May all those who are not with you be back next Christmas. May tomorrow bring us all peace, just peace, His peace which no one can take away.

INTROIT

THIS day you shall know that the Lord will come, and save us; and in the morning you shall see His glory. Ps. The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof: the world and all they that dwell therein.

LAUDS

OSHEPHERDS, whom have you seen? Speak, tell us who has appeared on earth! The new-born Infant we have seen and a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, alleluia, alleluia.

VESPERS

THINE is princely rule in the day of Thy power in holy splendor. From the womb before the day-star have I gotten Thee.

THE BARONESS JOTS IT DOWN

CHIRSTMAS is in the air . . . The shops are full . . . people struggle to buy . . . push and crowd each other in good humor . . . Newspapers scream headlines . . . ADVANCES . . . RETREATS . . . SLIGHT AMERICAN-BRITISH CASUALTIES. Birth and death meet. Life goes on . . .

Posters call . . . ENLIST IN CIVIL DEFENSE . . . BE A NURSE'S AID . . . JOIN THE CITY PATROL. Friendship House has no headline, nor money for big beautiful posters . . . many don't even know it exists . . . hidden as it is in the heart of Harlem, on 135th Street . . . yet it is part and parcel of this strange, mad, tragic, glorious world of ours . . . in the year of grace 1942 . . . Children here, wait just as breathlessly for the birth of Christ and its rejoicing festivities. The war is being waged to make men free, to let children's laughter ring daily thru the lands of all nations . . . Friendship House tries to keep children's laughter ringing on 135th Street, Harlem, N. Y. And that is not easy . . . the children are there, so are men and women hungry for God, for knowledge . . . for light. We must have WORKERS . . . VOLUNTEERS . . . everyone is so busy with big, evident issues, that the reason for them being BIG AND EVIDENT gets lost in the scuffle . . . and the reason? One of them is HARLEM.

It is to abolish the HARLEMS of the world that this war is being waged. PLEASE WHILE IT GOES ON LET US REMEMBER THIS. We have no posters, no screaming headlines, no publicity to offer you men, women, and youth of New York City . . . all we have is the Christ Child in the heart of the Negro . . . will you . . .

who rush and work and try and work some more, find crumbs of time for us? WILL YOU? There is no uniform here, nor headlines, nor publicity, nor pictures in the paper. All we can offer you is work . . . and God's peace that no one can take away. All we can offer is your work to God . . . for those you love who are fighting the good fight to abolish the Harlems of the world. Will you join them by helping us?

We need . . . stenographers, typists, filing clerks, librarians, craft teachers, physical culture teachers, recreational and group workers for all age groups from seven to twenty-five . . . sewing classes, catechism, dancing, drama, drawing, leadership in Study Clubs, people to make over old clothes . . . men, women, youth, we need you all.

COME AND TALK IT OVER . . . IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN WORKING FOR GOD HIMSELF . . . without glamour . . . without publicity . . . without all the props that make work easy. Remembering that Friendship House is "war work" too in the eternal war between the Church and the devil for the souls of men.

Christ in the Negro needs you so! Catholic men, women, and youth. Will you answer His call?

The Christmas Bells are ringing . . . "Come let us adore" . . . let us express our adoration in deeds . . . FRIENDSHIP HOUSE . . . IS CALLING . . . FOR VOLUNTEERS.

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